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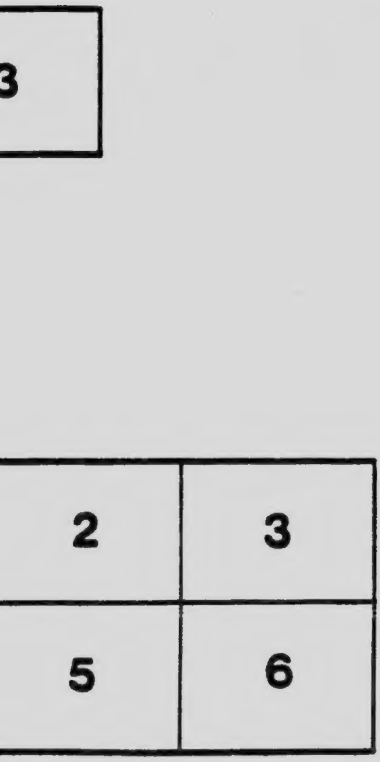

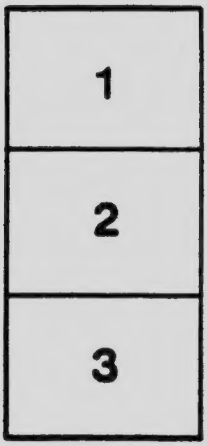

"Cripple John"

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"CRIPPLE JOHN"

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JOHN S. GREEN.

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"CRIPPLE JOHN,"

OR

THE LIFE AND EXPERIENCE OF JOHN S. GREEN.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTHPLACE AND CHILDHOOD.

I was born at H—, January 3, 1854. My parents were humble labouring people, who had a true parental affection for their children.

From my birth I was a cripple, although it was not fully known until I was three years of age. I did not develop and become active as other children and when I should have been walking, I was unable to sit alone My

parents became alarmed at this, and took me to the best physicians, but only to be disappointed by the stern fact that nothing could be done to help me. This greatly increased their watchfulness and care over me.

Yet I remember but little that occurred in my life, before I was eight years of age. At that time I was troubled with a tumor, which compelled me for weeks to lie on my breast across a stool, and caused me untold pain, accompanied by severe nervous attacks, making me like a leaf shivering before the wind.

Well do I remember my dear mother rising from her bed one night and hearing her say, "My poor child must be cold; I shall try to go quietly and put something over his shoulders." But, alas! her kindness only increased my suffering, because the sound of her voice make my poor shattered nerves so bad, that I could not refrain from crying out, nor could I bear her to come near or touch me. Oh, had I only known Jesus then what a comfort He would have been! My suffering was not over then, for about a year

later, after having moved to M—, I was again troubled with another tumor which caused me intense pain and after breaking remained a running sor

CHAPTER II.

MOTHER'S ILLNESS AND DEATH.

Shortly after that affliction my mother took ill and my aunt who came to see her, proposed taking me with her, so that mother might be relieved of me for a time. As I had never been from home, the prospect of a visit greatly pleased my childish fancy. Accordingly arrangements were made for my trip and just before starting Mother said to me, "What would you do if I were not here when you came back?" Naturally I was startled at the question and said, "Why mother, where are you going?"—for I could not bear to see her going away. As she knew this she said, "I'm not go away, but if I should die before you come back?" Not grasping the thought that she might, not fully

realizing what my loss would be, I said in my simplicity, "Well, I'll have a good mother," referring to my aunt whom I loved. To my surprise, she died seven days later, leaving me,—a helpless cripple boy, with three sisters and two brothers.

The next day I was taken home to look upon, the once tender loving mother, but now cold in the embrace of death. How strange were my feelings, when I was carried in and placed beside the stove! I thought of mother and wished her to come and take off my clothes, to warm my crippled hands and press her kiss upon my cheek. On looking around the house, I saw the loved form lying, and my heart felt ready to break, yet I could not weep. After we had looked upon her for the last time, we were taken back to my uncle's. Everything appeared strangely sad; I scarcely knew whether my heart or poor crippled body pained most.

The next day her remains were taken to R—, and laid in the silent grave. When father returned from the funeral, he came to my uncle's to see his children, and coming

over to where I sat on the floor, laid his hand on my head saying,—"My poor boy." At that I broke down and wept. I thought I had always been mother's care, but then I was father's and it seemed to me, I had never loved him so much. Turning from me and taking up my youngest sister just two years of age, he sat down weeping. When he recovered from his outburst of grief he said, softly, "John, would you rather stay with your sister or go home with me?" It seemed the hardest question I was ever asked to answer; the thought of being separated from both my father and my mother crushed me, but knowing that he could not care for me as my aunt would, I wisely decided to stay.

Time wore on, and I began to creep around the yard in the soft snow, my aunt never thinking it would hurt me. Although I knew mother never allowed me to do this, yet I went. Soon I caught cold, and on rising one morning I noticed another sore, which caused me shortness of breath and

great pain in my side. My aunt did all she could to help me, yet I never fully recovered from this.

CHAPTER III.

AT HOME AGAIN.

When I had been about a year and a half with my aunt, father moved away some miles from where he had been. As he was anxious to have us under his care, he married again, and our stepmother proved to be very kind to us. Then we were all at home once more. But, I often went back to visit my uncle, and one day, while there, I noticed my uncle looking very earnestly at me. At last, he said, "John, you ought to be doing something." Wondering at this, I said, "What can I do?" He answered, "You ought to read your Bible." Although mother had taught me the "First Reader," I had by that time forgot everything except the alphabet. Then he advised me to get another

"Reader," and when I had learnt to read, I was to start at the "Four Gospels." With the help of father and step-mother, I accomplished this difficult task, and through reading them once, I began to fear God and felt it my duty to read the Bible.

Some years after this a camp-meeting, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Woodcock, a Methodist minister, was started about three miles from our home. My brother T—, and sister S—, attended it, and, on their return from the meeting, related to me what happened. One night, a young minister who was helping in the meetings, came home with them, and next morning after breakfast, he read a chapter and prayed with us. Truly, he was in the Spirit, for in answer to prayer, He came to my heart; tears unbidden rolled down my cheeks; sorrow which seemed altogether different from what I had ever felt, took possession of my heart.

After prayer I heard him inquire where Mr. M—, lived and expressed his desire of visiting him. At this, I stole quietly and unobserved out of the door and crept as

quickly as I could across the fields so that I might hear him pray again. I was not disappointed, for he prayed again in the Holy Ghost and this moved me greatly.

Then, I was very anxious to attend the camp-meeting, and after speaking to my brother about this, he said, "John, there is no use in going to the meetings and trying to get religion, while you have hard feelings in your heart toward others." Crippled as I was, I had grown self-willed and passionate, and that often got me into trouble. The Holy Spirit did His part in convincing of sin, but when I found out my part, I had too proud a heart to humble myself, to ask forgiveness of those whom I had wronged. Still, I knelt every night before going to bed and asked God to forgive me, but I would not forgive my fellowmen. So my prayer was unanswered, and I remained in darkness.

But one night my sister, after all had retired, came home, went from room to room and awoke us up to tell us that she had found salvation. Although we had been so closely bound to each other by the tender ties of

affection, I then felt a strange backwardness and coldness in my heart toward her. This was because I loved darkness rather than light. As there was no longer that tender union between us, it made me feel very sad, but I was unwilling to admit that it was all on my part. Shortly afterwards she married and this increased my sorrow.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST VISIT TO MY SISTER.

Time passed by very quickly, yet I did not improve it very much. On my first visit to my sister, revival meetings, conducted by the Rev. Mr. K—, and Mr. Robert Q—, a local preacher of that neighbourhood, were in progress. I attended them and felt God was present in great power. I knew I should yield to Him, but held back a captive to the enemy, who sought to drag the soul from my poor crippled body down to everlasting torments, being no respector of persons,—his aim being to defeat God's plan of redemption of all mankind—rich or poor, crippled or straight—who came in by the gate of repentance. Oh, who would reject the lowly Jesus and accept for their father so cruel a taskmaster?

Yet after all these gracious visitations from God, that is what I did. Pharaoh refused to let me go and I failed to tell him, that by the strength of God, I would do His will. I hardened my heart (which I had to do or else be saved) and we walked hellward, together.

CHAPTER V.

A NEW AMUSEMENT.

When I returned home, I became still more careless. On seeing others smoke and use tobacco, I thought that would be a fine way for me to pass my lonely hours, and induced my brother to give me a pipe and some tobacco. When father heard this he was much displeased, and threatened to punish me if I continued its use.

But I had set my heart on learning to smoke and so took my pipe away, about two acres from the house and hid it in a hollow log. To this secluded spot, I went several times a day, to enjoy myself with my new-found pleasure. Through the effect of this treat which the devil was so anxious to have me enjoy, I would return to the house, sick and trembling, resolving not to touch it

again. But after my sickness passed away, I had a stronger desire than ever for it. I continued in this way, until I was a slave to the appetite. When my brothers and sisters went out in the evenings for enjoyment, I stayed at home puffing away, trying to console myself with it,– poor miserable comfort it proved to be.

CHAPTER VI.

A REVIVAL,—MY CONVERSION.

About that time we moved to R , and I went to visit friends near Jock River. While there, I attended another revival, conducted by the Rev. Mr. Blanchette. Many attended it, as they were desirous that he would give his experience while in the Roman Catholic Church, but this was not his mission. He was there to preach repentance and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.

A young lady in the home where I was visiting, went to the "meeting," and on her return we began to enquire what she had seen and heard,—making light of it. Apparently the truth had reached her heart, for she answered quite seriously, "there is something in salvation, we all need it." I thought that

is what I need. I felt the Holy Spirit drawing me to seek it, but I was very fond of foolish talking and jesting, having and making all the fun I could. But it came very clearly before me, that if I got saved, I would have to give up all that. I also knew it would mean a separation from those who continued to indulge in it.

But my burden became so heavy, that I could bear it no longer. There was an afternoon meeting and I started to creep across the field, in hope that I might find relief. When I came in sight of the "Hall," the enemy said, "The people will look so much at you, that you will not be able to stand it." This worried me till great drops of perspiration fell from my brow. But God opened up a way of escape from this fierce assault.

Just then two women, who had lately been saved, came up and let down the fence for me to cross over, I was greatly encouraged and made my way to the house of prayer. The service began and the sermon just suited my case. Oh, what a poor miserable wretch I felt myself to be! But the meeting closed leaving me in that condition.

Feeling very tired, I thought I would not return the way I had come, but would go around by the road, though it was much

farther. I started, and on my way one may imagine my feelings, as I watched the people, some walking, others driving, but I was creeping along, having no comfort here and the thought that I was creeping down the broad road to destruction, weighed me down.

At last, I reached the gate, and on looking up to the house, which seemed a long way off, I felt so tired that I wondered how I would reach the place. But just in a moment I was so rested and refreshed, that I could not imagine what had happened to me. Strange feelings of peace and joy mingled together, came over me so softly and gently, that I could not understand it, but I thought to myself, "I'll try and go back again to-night," which I did, God having provided a way for me to drive with friends.

I felt the sermon very helpful to me, and when the invitation to seek salvation was given, I was not long in making my way to the altar. God did not keep me long till He saved me,—His Spirit bearing witness with mine, that I was born again.

CHAPTER VII.

NEW LIGHT.

From that time I began to seek the company of Christian people and found some true friends, among whom was Mr. Albert C—. Often I went to his home, so that I might converse with him on religious subjects. I had never heard any preaching against tobacco, and was greatly surprised when Bro. C— asked me one day, what I thought about it. I told him I did not see any harm in it. He said, "John, if Mr. W—, our minister, were to say, there is no harm in chopping wood on Sunday, I could believe it as readily as I can that there is none in using tobacco." I felt this gentle reproof and from that time I was backward in smoking before my Christian brethren.

Some time after, Mr. Hugh B—, when exhorting me to seek a second work, said, "Well, Bro. Green, if ever you get into Beulah

Land, you will have to leave your pipe on this side." Refusing to walk in the light, to follow the conviction of my heart and the kind exhortations of my brethren, I kept my pipe, but lost my communion with God. Nor could I expect anything else, for the Word says, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth." John 15 : 13. The Spirit was leading me into it, but I drew back, thinking I had too much to give up. Still I thought I had not lost all, yet I received no blessing from God.

While in this condition, I went up to Irish Creek, to a camp-meeting held by the Rev. R. C. Horner. I heard the Rev. J. Ferguson preach on "presenting our bodies a living sacrifice," and on examining myself found, that I could not present my body to be preserved blameless, while I defiled it with tobacco. Yet, I had a zeal and love for the cause of God, and felt I could not give up and go back altogether. I went to every meeting that I had the privilege of attending.

CHAPTER V.

IN DARKNESS.

In September of 1893, I had the opportunity to attend a camp-meeting at Munster, conducted by Mr. Horner. One Sunday afternoon, while having a good feeling, I gave my experience. After I was through, Bro. H. looking out on the number walking leisurely around the tent, said, "I would rather be Bro. Green with his experience and all crippled up, than be one of you walking around with your gold-headed cane and no salvation." This expression of his feeling toward me sank very deep into my heart, I thought, "I am deceiving him, I have not got what he thinks I have." After the service closed some of the Christian people came around me, praising God. I tried to make myself feel good but had not the power to do it.

Then I began to cry to God for help and deliverance from the bondage of sin. Once more I tried to coax God into my heart, but the Spirit whispered "Your tobacco." At that I made up my mind I was going to heaven and would not allow so small a thing to ruin my soul. So I threw away my pipe and tobacco and made this vow to God: "That as long as His pure eye saw me on earth, He would never see me use tobacco." I got some relief from this, but not the witness that I was saved.

The meetings closed that night and I wen home with Bro. C--. Next morning when he was out attending to duties on the farm, I felt very sad. Everything seemed silent. I felt as if I had not a friend —no one on whom to lean. At last I went out to the field where Bro. C-- was, and on seeing me and knowing my distress, he turned and said, "Let go!" At that I burst into tears, over which I had no control truly I had a broken and a contrite heart. Then he went on with his work and I returned to the house, but did not go in. I thought I would go down by

the river, but there was nothing there to satisfy me.

Once more my desire for smoking came back, but my vow was made. The thought that I had given up all, yet, had not found Jesus, crushed me. I felt I must go to someone that enjoys salvation, and started once more to Bro. C—. When I reached him, we sat down and wept together, I from a burdened heart, and he in sympathy for my state. As I had found no relief, he at last said, that I had better go down to his aunt, who lived at Billing's Bridge, as her family had been greatly blessed during the camp-meeting and would be helpful to me. I started as soon as I could not refusing his counsel as I had done in the past.

CHAPTER IX.

RESTORED.

The night I arrived at Billing's Bridge, there was a prayer meeting in the home to which I went. I felt so much surrounded by the presence of God, that I cried out and this made me feel I was saved. However, next morning after family devotion, I went over to the window, and while looking out on nature, light broke into my heart. All creation appeared new: the very fences seemed to have a beautiful soft appearance, caused by the presence of Omnipotence. While I remained in that place, my delight was in religious conversation and prayer.—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

On looking back over the past, I could then see my reason for groping in the dark so long. I depended on my own understanding and

was not simple enough to trust God. My dear reader, if you are a seeker of salvation, cease from your own wisdom and take the Bible plan, which will mean death to all your wise plans and ideas concerning this great work. I continued to walk in all the light God gave me, and tenderly did the Spirit lead, revealing to me that I was not yet sanctified.

After I returned home, a holiness meeting was held at Bro. R--'s and I found great liberty in worshiping God. While listening to some testify to inward purity, truly I felt all that the poet expresses in those lines:—

"My heart strings groan with deep complaint,
My flesh lies panting after Thee;
And every nerve, and every joint,
Is on the stretch for purity."

Bro. W. T--, in giving his experience, said, "I grieved God only once, from the time I was justified up to the time I was entirely sanctified. Since then, I have never been conscious of grieving Him." At that time my faith reached up to God. He came suddenly to His temple and cleansed me from all sin. I broke out into holy laughter. Oh! the sweetness of being ushered into the Holy of Holies. No longer could I say:

"The seed of sin's disease.
Out of my heart erase,
Enter Thyself and drive it hence,
And take up all the place."

My prayer was turned to praises and I took up the language of Canaan,

"I'm over, yes over, in the Promised Land".

That night I woke up several times and broke out into peals of laughter. Wave after wave of glory swept over my soul, for, "Behold, He that keepeth Israel, shall neither slumber nor sleep," Psalms 121:4.

Some time after I was sanctified, while listening to the word being preached, God baptized me with the Holy Ghost and Fire. This gave me a fervent love and an undying zeal to labor to bring others to Jesus. It remains upon me up to the present. Often I feel my need of being taught of God, and to this end I study the Bible. We are living in an age in which the truth is greatly perverted; men plead for sin, many repeat Rom. 3:10, but fail to see verses 13-18. Notice the words, "The way of peace have they not known." This was my state until I was justified by faith. Then my views were changed too. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Often I look back to the time I was unsaved, and had a mind that was dark to the things that concern my eternal welfare.

CHAPTER X.

MY NEEDS SUPPLIED.

Crippled as I was, I tried to earn money by taking pieces of work (against my father's wishes) from neighbors. Before I was converted, I often wished that I could have my life insured, so that I would have something to lean on in my old age. But I found that there was a company in which I could be insured, both for this life and that which is to come. The foundation of my hope, for both early and later days, you will find in God's eternal truth, (Job 1; 3:42 12). Job's riches were doubled, because he refused to withdraw his trust from God, and the God who took such care of his servant Job does not forget to take care of his servant—John Green.

I have been much blessed in body, and have been able to travel from place to place, to attend camp-meetings, Conventions, and other meetings. Financially I have been

helped, God putting it into the hearts of His people to share with their crippled brother. My needs have been all supplied and will, as long as I keep low enough to spend it all to His glory. I remember people often said to me, "It is well to be you, because you are having all your suffering here, you are sure of heaven." But, when I came under the inspection of the "Great Physician," I found that my heart was more diseased than my body. I knew that my suffering would not give me an entrance through the Pearly Gates. But, unlike the Insurance Company here, I was not turned away because I was too diseased; but the balm of Gilead was applied making a perfect cure

My pathway grows brighter as I press on towards the New Jerusalem. At times I suffer great pain, but then comes the exceeding weight of glory:

> My creeping days will soon be o'er,
> Then I shall reach the other shore,
> Where pain and sorrow are no more
> Through an eternal day.

I have been asked to give my experience for print, and I do so only to exalt my Saviour, and hope that through reading it some souls may be helped.

Climbing the pathway to heaven,
  Up to the mansions of light,
Keeping the prize set before me,
  With the Word and the Spirit to guide.

Soon will my labors be ended,
  My weapons of warfare laid down;
The Master will whisper, "Come up, John,
  I'll give you a robe and a crown."

Sometimes I am tired and weary,
  Pain racking this frail house of clay;
I'd welcome the angels to carry me up
  Into Abraham's bosom to stay.

But, ah! when I look all around me,
  And view men dying in sin,
My burdened heart cries, "A while longer,
  Lord, send me to gather them in."

Oh, reader! beware you don't miss it,
  The goal set before you to win;
When we gather together to judgment,
  Say, will you be washed and made clean?

Yours in the fulness of the Gospel of Jesus,

JOHN S. GREEN.